

## Maryland Judicial Ethics Committee

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Published Opinion     Unpublished Opinion     Unpublished Letter of Advice

Judge May Solicit and Receive Compensation for Writings on Foreign Judicial System

You have requested the opinion of the Judicial Ethics Committee regarding an endeavor which you are considering. Your letter of inquiry explains:

“During the month of August, fifteen judges from across the country will be visiting mainland China for the purpose of inspecting and comparing their system of justice. Pursuant thereto, I have considered the possibility of contacting various publishers to determine if any are interested in having me write on certain aspects of the Chinese justice system, about which they may have specific concern. If there is sufficient interest, I, of course, would be prepared to write a given article for an agreed sum of money.”

It is the opinion of this Committee that such writing for compensation as you contemplate is authorized in Canon XXX of the Canons of Judicial Ethics (Maryland Rule 1231), which says, in part:

“A judge may lecture upon or instruct in law, or write upon the subject, and accept compensation therefor, if such course does not interfere with the due performance of his judicial duties and is not forbidden by some positive provision of law.”

We have examined the proscriptions in Canon XXIV and in Rule 9 of the Rules of Judicial Ethics against engaging in or lending the influence of his name or the prestige of his office by a judge to advance the success or welfare of private business ventures. We consider those proscriptions to be inapplicable to the legal writing you propose.